


The LOG of the GOSPEL SHIP

by the Captain
· LUKE · W · BICKEL ·



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· Mission · Society ·
BOSTON, MASS.



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SKETCHES
BY
CAPTAIN LUKE W. BICKEL



American Baptist Foreign Mission Society
BOSTON

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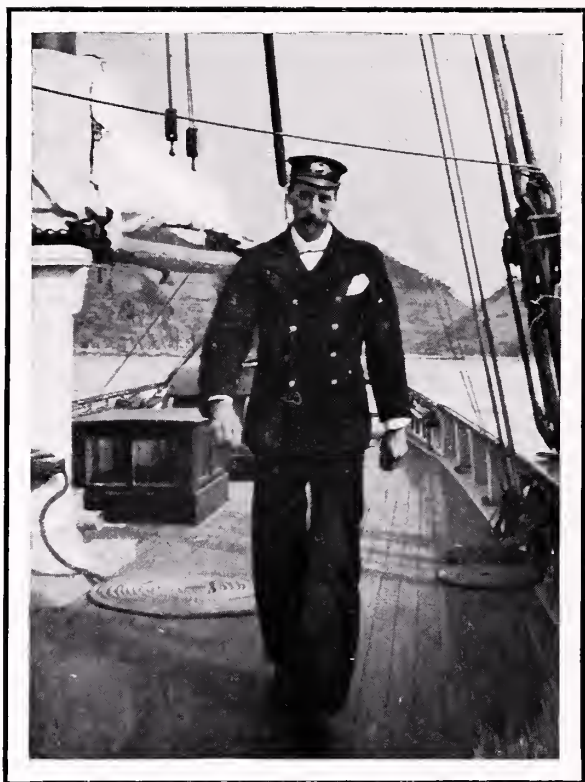
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An Introduction to the Captain



MISSION work on the Inland Sea of Japan, between the main island of the archipelago and Shikoku, is carried on by the "Fukuin Maru," or "Gospel Ship," a two-masted schooner with auxiliary motor power, together with a small Japanese boat known as "Fukuin Maru No. 2," and a motor launch. The schooner was given to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society by Mr. R. S. Allan, of the Allan Line of steamships, as a memorial to his mother, who was for many years a generous contributor to the Japan mission. It is a staunch vessel, rated A-1 at Lloyds, and was launched at Yokohama in September, 1899. The captain is Luke W. Bickel, son of Dr. Philipp Bickel of the Baptist Publication House in Cassel, Germany. The "Fukuin Maru No. 2" was built in 1909 through the generosity of friends in America, and is in charge of the former boatswain on the "Fukuin Maru."

The following collection of sketches of the "Fukuin Maru" and its work, by Captain Bickel, includes some of the best of the captain's writings published in *The Baptist Missionary Magazine*, *Missions*, *Gleanings*, and the Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, together with several hitherto unpublished articles.



CAPTAIN BICKEL ON THE "FUKUIN MARU"

“Eight Bells, Lights Burning Bright and All’s Well”

Being the call used by the man on lookout at night to the officer in charge at the change of the watch. Ringing out on the night air it brings cheer and assurance of safety amid the uncertain strife with wind and wave.



HOW does the ship’s log, written plainly enough on our heart and mind by the incisive pen of daily, earnest endeavor for Christ’s sake, read? We read of sin-created, desperate need; terrible to behold and beyond the power of man to alleviate! God-given power alone can meet it! Pleading for that power to fall upon us like a cloak, to cover our weakness from the vision of men, we go. The result is a marvelous opening of doors, yes, and of hearts, too, in many places. But where are the statistics? Where were they for the first five years or ten, on many a now well-reaped field? We of the “Gospel Ship” live in a Japan of thirty years ago.

“I suppose you are establishing churches right along as you go,” said some one. No, indeed, friend! A harvest full and plenty in a jungle patch, without the toil of clearing, plowing and seed-sowing it is not wise to look for. Nay, the toil, the watching, the waiting must go before, and then, given God’s blessing, the harvest is sure. That God’s blessing has been upon, and is upon, your little ship is evidenced in a thousand ways. Does a field plowed and sown look like a jungle patch? Look, friends, look, neither does this field appear as the waste it did three years ago. Then a field as yet unknown, untried, lay before us. Now more than three hundred towns and villages on many islands have had a repeated, systematically arranged presentation of the way of salvation. To all of these places we are now cordially welcome. Some four hundred persons are registered on our books as being especially friendly or in many cases receptive, to whom we occasionally send literature through the post, receiving, moreover, from some of them frequent inquiries on questions of religious truth. One central preaching place with a resident evangelist, was reported as having been established last year, with six regularly supplied outstations and more to follow. The evangelist was well received, the toy was new. Then the people wearied, and persecution began, open and strong. The evangelist lived quietly on, worked, suffered and prayed. The tide has turned. Persecution has ceased. He writes, “The people have now come to know my heart, that it is not a lie, and they are gathering about me again with truer interest than before.”

And now the second center, further west, has been established. A man, tried and trusted, was found willing to go and live there, itinerating to twelve places regularly for the present. Persecution arose at once. The priests of the four Buddhist temples announced meetings three nights in succession. Several hundred people gathered to hear the Christian invaders denounced. The second day the evangelist went to the temples and spoke to the priests. That night those priests not only did not abuse, but turned and told the story of the "Gospel Ship," commending the zeal of Christians and urging their followers to be equally eager to propagate their own faith. But a priest from a distance was there. His mood was different. His words bore the impress of his mood. Hard words they were. The evangelist asked permission to speak. Before a temple full of people he cross-questioned the priest and scored decidedly. The priest finally refused to reply, saying, "You and I are like fire and water, we hate one another," to which the evangelist answered, "That is your view; let me state mine. My master tells me that you and I are brethren, that I must love you, and this I do." The next day came the "Jesus Ship." "She is loaded with three hundred preachers from Tokyo to fight the priests," said rumor. "Invite the priests to come on board," said we. They came in gorgeous robes. We had an interesting conversation, in the midst of which they fell to quarreling among themselves on questions of their own sadly divided faith. We visited their temples the next day, and one at least of them listened to our words with more than common interest. This was four months ago. A few days since, in visiting the place, we noted with real gratitude the cordial spirit shown by the crowded house of listeners; and as we went out and met our temple friends in grand array, going around to collect the cold weather dues, we stopped before a wondering crowd to have a friendly chat.

A third center, at the western end of the sea, we hope soon to see established. In our eagerness we had almost made a mistake. But God hindered that he might help. No suitable man was forthcoming. As usual, we chafed at the delay. Why this hindrance? Then came our new cruising permit for the ensuing year, and the reason seemed clear. We were granted the privilege of visiting many islands hitherto refused. We did not expect they would be opened to us, for some of them are of strategic importance. Yet the fact of such privilege having been given us alters the whole aspect of that part of the field, enlarges it greatly and makes it necessary to use as a center a place not originally intended as such.

Again, God is good. A cable announced the gift of a motor launch to be used in connection with the "Fukuin Maru" by the generous and considerate donor of that vessel. We thank God for it.

It is proving, as has the "Fukuin Maru" all along, a most powerful

object lesson on Christian enterprise. We go to an official in a large city away from our field to ask a favor. "The 'Fukuin Maru'?" Oh, yes, we have heard of her. You go to strange places for a good purpose; we will grant your request." We meet on the railway the president of another road. "The 'Fukuin Maru'?" Why, yes, I have read in the daily papers of her work for the island people of our country. A strangely persistent, energetic religion is that of yours." Whereupon we have a two hours' conversation on the way of life. We go to an island. It is night, and it is dark. We knock at a door and ask for someone. The owner opens the door. "The 'Fukuin Maru'?" That is the 'Jesus Ship,' is it not? I am the new school teacher here. The other day the children came running to tell me that the 'Jesus Ship' was passing down the channel with a queer looking craft (the launch) towing her. They told me all about the talks they had heard. I should like to hear more. May I visit your ship? If so, when?" The result was a four hours' talk on board regarding the Saviour and his love. So, then, from island to island, and from village to village we have again found our way; taking each day one more step in the process of evangelizing these islands; dealing every hour one more blow at the dark, looming wall reared in the name of myriads of false gods and the man-deluding fables that uphold them.

Our First Voyage



ALL the perplexing problems having been dealt with I was able at last on September 18, 1909, at daylight, to heave up anchor and set sail from Yokohama for Kobe. The "Gleaner" gave us a pull out as far as the lightship and then we spread our wings. It was a bad time of the year, and the barometer began to fall after we left, but we had a good run down the gulf and round the coast into the Kii Channel.

We made sometimes five miles, sometimes twelve per hour. We ran neck and neck on the Tuesday morning with the steamer "Otaru Maru" for several hours. We averaged "to the good" nine miles an hour until within fifty miles of Kobe, with a fair prospect of getting in on Tuesday evening, when it began to blow and the sea rose. Well, the upshot of it was that I spent five days over the other fifty miles, and days of hard work. We had three struggles during that time, beat up into the Gulf of Osaka three times, and had to run out before a gale as many times. The last gale was very heavy, and after twelve hours of hard beating and straining to keep my ground I had to give in and run out through the Tennis Straits again in the night. It thundered, it rained, it fairly howled,

and the sea ran high, and by flashes of vivid lightning I picked my way through the passage. It was a grand sight though, and all through the vessel behaved splendidly. When we got into Hiogo Bay and I got my clothes off and into bed for the first time in a week I could not help feeling grateful for the experience. After a few hours' rest I got up hale and hearty, and congratulating myself on having "had it out" with the young lady at the very outset and once for all. Twice during those five days I had to beat off a lee shore, and once drifted down within ten feet of a rock bed in a dead calm. I could not help smiling as I remembered the injunction of the Executive Committee, "We do not expect you to look after details concerning the vessel, but to entrust those to the care of the Japanese crew." After what I have seen even now, that injunction will have to remain unheeded if I remain here for thirty years, unless this nation or that portion of it which has charge of ships gets converted in mind, soul and body.

"And what are you doing in Hiogo now?" you will ask. Well, just this — waiting for a permit. When the application had been made to Colonel Buck, the United States minister, he could not ascertain to whom it should be made by him. He tried the Foreign Office, and after some delay and a fortnight wasted over a letter sent to wrong address, he found I had to apply to the Minister of Communication. I had to make out a fresh application which after two weeks produced a reply to the effect that the names of all places we wish to visit must be specified. This I have now done, and from the tenor of their note I should not by any means look for a refusal, which will mean that the United States flag now flying may continue to fly. But to guard against all possibility of failure I went up for my examination and passed, in case we should have to go under the Japanese flag. I expect a definite reply from the minister inside of ten days, but in the mean time we are not idle.

I came into Hiogo Bay instead of Kobe for several reasons, one among which was the fact that large numbers of Inland Sea sailing vessels frequent this place. We are holding meetings on board for the crews of these vessels, going to them beforehand and giving them a personal invitation. We tell them of the purpose of the vessel, and if they cannot come on board now to look out for us down among the islands. To most of the men the whole subject of Christianity and the motive underlying our action seem to be new, and the motive gives food for thought. By visiting half a dozen junks and schooners during the day, all of which are within hailing distance, I can get enough hearers for the evening to fill the little cabin, say twenty or thirty, and as these vessels come and go continually we get a fresh lot of men. Coming as they do to us as our guests, as it were, we have a great advantage in maintaining proper order.

The First Baptism



LD Glory is half-mast high in the westerly gale today. "The wind will fray the fly of that flag off!" says the boatswain. "Let it fray, bo'sun," said we, "for it suits our mood!" This on a day last winter.

The "Mission Ship" had started bright and early that day. Wind there was none, and none was expected. We crept along through the narrow channels, partly sailing, partly towing the vessel with our launch, when suddenly, down came a snow squall off the high hills, and then a lull, then another squall, with the weight of which we shot out into the open, picking up the launch as we passed and then towing her in turn. Squall followed squall. Reef after reef was taken. The hills and rocks were wiped out of sight by the snow as it drove and swirled. An hour more and we were in sore plight, sea steadily rising, wind steadily increasing. The launch towing astern was every moment more seriously endangered. To hoist her on board is impossible. We watch anxiously the sailor lad who sits in her, steering, and try to encourage him and ourselves by an occasional word of good cheer. Five minutes more and we shall be under shelter! We shout and point to the dimly seen line of hills under which we hope to



THE FIRST BAPTISM ON THE INLAND SEA

round up in safety. Just then with the onrush of a heavy "fourth sea" the launch gives an ominous yaw, and snap goes one of the stout tow-ropes. If the other rope snaps the launch and man both are lost. We know that, so does he. He with all a sailor's pluck goes to refasten the broken tow-rope, when with a sudden heave he is thrown bodily overboard. Rocks on either side make "bringing the ship to" all but impossible. The

attempt is made despite the danger, and a boat gets away with much difficulty. For three long, weary hours in the heavy sea we search for our shipmate, but to no purpose. Stiff with cold, drenched with spray and driving sleet, it was a sorry company that knelt around the skylight in the falling snow, with bared heads, to commit their comrade to God. There were no dry eyes there, not even those of the case-hardened skipper. Then after a brief struggle with wind and wave our vessel was brought into safety, and a three days' search for the body of our friend began, only to end in failure. It is a long story, that of the search, and the breaking of the news to the widowed wife and old father by one of the men, who, in true sailor fashion, went bravely to his task, then broke down like a child and from that very fact did it all the better. Enough of this!

The man? Who was he? A lad named Kida Etaro from Sanuki Province, on the main south island. He joined the ship at the beginning, and with the rest led an evil life; gambled, drank, squandered, thieved, lied and what not! The "Mission Ship" was in bad grace, or rather *disgrace*. The missionary skipper had a sore heart. Some sneered, some blamed, some few who understood, pitied, while the men, with oriental assurance, thinking he knew nothing of their evil ways, took him for an easy dupe. The skipper prayed, and waited, and prayed again.

A change came. Kida Etaro changed. Others seemed to change too, but this man certainly *did*. He first, then others asked for baptism. We felt the need of caution, and put them off, but finally consented that he, at least, should be baptized; yet now it was too late, he had gone, gone home, yes, home! His example was to have helped the others, so planned the skipper; and now—he was gone! The skipper's heart was sore. So when Old Glory, half-mast high, frayed in the gale that day, what wonder he replied, "Let it fray, bo'sun, for it suits our mood."

The Sequel:—Some four months have passed. The "Mission Ship" is snug in a wee, land-locked harbor on a sunny, laughing day. The men have, of their own accord, "dressed ship," i.e. put flags from the mast-heads to the deck. Friends come down and all hearts are glad. The launch is filled with visiting friends, and towing a boatful astern glides down the narrow bay to a quiet spot. A hymn of praise is sung, a prayer ascends. A moment's solemn hush, in which we feel that God is near, and then—"In the name of the Father, the Son—" comes the voice of the officiating missionary on the still air, and the first converts from the "Mission Ship" are buried in the baptismal waters of the very sea on which they lived their evil lives. The first? No, not so, for their shipmate, Kida Etaro, entered into life through the same waters of the beautiful Inland Sea of

Japan, and led the way. We returned quietly to the ship, and there, after a word of praise and thanksgiving, a memorial brass plate was fixed to the mainmast:

Kida Etaro, Seaman, died believing in God. While serving his country in the cause of Christ he was lost at sea.

He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

Thus reads the legend. And so ended a happy day.

A Year's Record



Conflict in Japanese waters is over, thanks to silent Togo." So said the papers. "It is still raging," say we of the "Mission Ship." Thank God for peace between nations, for we love peace. Thank God for the war of souls, for such strife is our joy. It is five years since the mission ship first went out to meet the foe. An unknown field lay before us, containing a heavy population scattered on many islands, to practically none of which Christianity had as yet found access. Prejudices deep and strong, the product of centuries of isolation, held absolute sway. Hundreds of miles of intricate channels and harbors representing the only door to hundreds of towns and villages, thousands of miles of mountain paths leading from village to village, then all unknown and untried, are now well known through frequent use. The villages, the people, their ways and thoughts, then an unopened book, are now known through constant contact. Several hundred towns and villages are systematically visited with the gospel message. Some of the islands are divided into groups with regularly itinerating evangelists. Five Sunday schools have been established under the care of these evangelists; an evangelistic paper is issued to meet the special needs of the island people; Christian libraries have been placed in some of the villages. Thousands of homes that had never heard a word spoken of God's love and knew Christianity only to fear or hate it are now open to us. Prejudices towering over our heads like the battlements of some mighty fortress have been swept away.

What about the year? Dark clouds of illness and weakness hung over us at the beginning. At the end we can write, "His mercy endureth forever." In spite of illness, despite time taken in hauling the good ship up on the beach, employing men, altering the vessel and without expert aid of any kind, fitting the engines promised last year, the meetings were many, covering a wide field. Are the engines a success? "We are

glad you have those engines, for now you can come to us more often," say friendly island folk. "I thank the friends at home from the depths of my heart for those engines," says the missionary-skipper's good wife, whose service of bearing and forbearing is one of the unwritten pages of mission life. And to the missionary-skipper himself, who gets all the credit and does only part of the work, the engines have come as a wonderful tonic, for does not the fact of being able to do nearly three months' work in two give great joy, altogether aside from much actual saving of strength and relief from mental strain? We therefore thank God and thank those whom he has used to give us this help.

Events in the centers have given much hope. The evangelists have been most faithful. At the eastern center a school principal was left, when last we reported, persecuted, deprived of position, disowned by parents and friends, because he had followed the Master. As we dared not help him, he stood up like the man he is, and helped himself. Being refused employment he took a pack on his back and peddled small wares. We waited to test him, then changed his pack to one filled with Bibles, and now he has gone to the seminary to prepare for the ministry. Dr. Dearing writes, "Your island friend has touched our hearts. The Japanese preacher who first sailed with you had, as you know, fallen away and we had lost sight of him. It was from him your friend first heard of God's love. He has now sought the preacher out and brought him back to Christian influences." And how about his island home? God gave him power, chiefly the power of a Christlike silence. The wife is near the Kingdom, one child is in a Christian school, the father who disowned him gives us his home for meetings and the village elected him as village headman before he went to the seminary.

Sorrow came to one evangelist through the death of his child. Painful as it was, he decided to use this event for Christ's cause if possible. Rumor had it that the child would be mutilated and nails driven through its little hands and feet in the casket. The people came to the burial service three hundred strong. The evangelist-father gave a heart-moving address on the love of God and the Christian's hope. We then invited all present to see the little one that we might prove the rumors false. As we stood keeping the pressing throng in check with our broad sailor back and holding the casket firmly that it might not be overthrown, we heard many expressions of surprise, for what they saw was but a dear little child lying amid soft white cushions as if asleep, with a little rose held in one hand. Some sixty Sunday school children led the procession to the grave. This event was soon followed by a baptismal service so impressive that one of the leading men, a doctor, said, "There is depth and meaning in these Christian rites. I feel I should like myself to be baptized." This

center was opened three years ago under terrible opposition from the priests, yet on this day the mayor's son was baptized, while the children of one of the opposing priests have during the year come to the evangelist for instruction, so greatly has sentiment changed through the faithful labors of this faithful man.

Christian fellowship is in the air, these days. We trust we have a share in it. News from the mainland tells us we have. From a Methodist school we hear, "A girl from a well-to-do island family, having learned through the ship to love God and pray, has entered here to get a Christian education." An island middle school principal of much ability but of weak will was ruining his home by his indulgence in drink. We warned him with terrible earnestness. We feared he was offended. He resigned his position and sought and found without our aid a position in this same Methodist school that he might have the help of Christian influences. From an American Board mission we hear, "A family has begun to attend here regularly the members of which first heard the good news from the 'Fukuin Maru.'" From a Church Missionary Society mission we learn, "A young student from Ikuchi Island has joined us; he says one of the ship's evangelists led him to God."

There is much more to tell of the year. But let this recital be enough to indicate that while the conflict carried on in God's great name is still raging, there is much to prove that in many places along the line of resistance the enemy is weakening. "We will work ten years as God gives us strength night and day without expecting visible results," we said when first we realized the condition of this field. We have often doubted our own strength, never God's power and ultimate purpose. A craven heart must he be indeed, who, in view of such striking evidences of God's power and guidance as come to us in hard, undeniable facts, would hesitate to give battle.

News from the War



HAT about the war?" some one says. "Which war? That with Russia or the one with the enemy of men's souls?" As to the first: In the islands, it means the pinch and sting of war, without its poor compensation of busy, stirring scenes and pageants, the so-called "glory" side of war. On the mainland war songs resound in school and street; moving bodies of troops throng the roads, a cheering populace beside them. On the islands, an official order to join the colors; a few flags, poor and bedraggled; a patriotic speech or two, with a few cheers; and the young men enter a boat to go to the mainland and — death!

News is scant; the weeks drag by; another official notice, followed by soulless memorial rites at the village temple and heavy hearts with none to comfort. No excitement *here* to drown the heart cry of the bereaved.

What then about the war of souls? There is a steady advance all along the line. We of the little sea force thank God to be able to add our humble share to the story of victories won. Our one regret is this, that during much of the year, owing to illness, our case has been one in which others have fought and done for us rather than that we have fought and done ourselves. To them then, under God, we give grateful acknowledgment for all that has been accomplished.



CAPTAIN BICKEL, FAMILY AND CREW

The evangelists in the island centers have done faithful work. Preaching at the centers; itinerating to twenty outstations; care of Sunday schools, now grown from two to five in number; attending and addressing "send-off" meetings for men ordered to the front; visiting the homes of absent soldiers; teaching inquirers slowly, oh, so slowly and patiently, truths that seem so simple to us; this and much more these faithful men have done; this is apart from the ship's efforts. One center needed stirring up; the people were so lethargic and the evangelist almost discouraged. But God sent the stirring: a teacher, thirteen years the honored principal of a local school, believed. He had believed for three

years or more, but he would lose his position if he came out. Three years we prayed, then he came out for baptism. His wife refused to cook for him. His mother threatened suicide to escape the disgrace. His child came running home from school: "Mother, the children say father has gone crazy, is it true?" Still he stood firm. We, being of sailor breed, called on our good brother, Rev. F. C. Briggs, to administer the ordinance, which he did with all the grace that he has put into many another service rendered for us during this year, and which makes him doubly our brother. Thirty school teachers gathered on the deck of the "Fukuin Maru" to hear earnest addresses before the baptism, which was held on the beach under the towering mountains, a stone's throw from this man's island home. The baptism over, the teacher promptly lost his position. Should we help him? We decided we dare not until he had helped himself. He looked for work, but all doors were closed to him. The weeks went by; the trial was sore; some jeered; some, especially the relatives, abused roundly. Would he stand the test? Some said he was paid, and that by the "Jesus people;" he and we knew better. Then one day the tide turned; the jeering stopped, for the former principal appeared with a pack on his back selling paper, pencils and the like, and was once more an honored man. He had stood the test; it was enough. He is now to have a new pack, one filled with Bibles, and, later on, we hope to see him as an evangelist.

At another center: Four years ago we entered the town amid greetings of "hairy savage" and "foreign fool," alone, strange and discouraged, but for God's presence. No house to be had, for a combine, locally as strong as any dreaded trust at home, barred the way. Then followed the feud with the priests, told of in an earlier report; and now? Surely the dear Christ-child rejoiced as on Christmas last the two hundred and seventy people, young and old, gathered to celebrate his birth. Eager hands had helped to decorate the house. The important men of the place came, even the mayor was there; and his son, a bright lad, read a short essay written by himself, on the meaning of the event. Better still, Uwo San, the old fisherman, and his son, a bright lad, too, were there; for there is no room for class distinction here. One young man read a paper. It was significant: he was a normal school student and was of a religious turn of mind. Now religions are many, and he said he was going to "have it out;" hence he took lodgings in a Buddhist temple with a priest, then went to the priest and to our evangelist and asked each openly for instruction, attending each on alternate days. Finally he began to pray; when men pray there is hope. There are four more men now praying at that center, hence we have hope. Well, this man prayed and on this Christmas eve he read a paper in favor of Christianity. Thus he read

publicly, unasked, his soul's declaration of independence, the first heard here in all the ages: it was a bold, brave deed. "Who follows in his train?"

Wonders never cease, that is, the wonders of God. Whether in Wales in revival times or in the islands of Japan, 'tis the same. Those who have read the leaflet "Eight Bells" will understand; those who know the ship at close range will wonder most. It concerns our crew. Leading reckless, careless, godless lives, they had hindered our work and given us many a sad hour. And the miracle? It is this: Did not those same men on many a night this year, when meetings were arranged and we were ill, go with the evangelist unasked to help him in our stead, the simple explanation of the skipper's illness being enough to satisfy the villagers? And was it not only a week ago, that the ship was in port, no evangelist on board and we away? We returned suddenly — we have been accused of having a bad habit of being sudden; it paid this time for we saw placards written in a rough hand, posted in the town, announcing a Christian meeting. "Whose meeting is this?" we asked of the boatswain as we met him. "It is ours; we have hired a house and are trying to do what we can; I hope you don't mind." Mind indeed! We can but thank God, whose mercy is ever new.

When in America, the good friends at the Rooms whispered in our ear the word "Engine!" As a result we have dreamt of engines all the year. But they must have whispered the same word "'Engine,' what about an engine for the 'Mission Ship?'" in the ear of many a good friend in the home churches, for the dreams are dreams no longer. Plans were made, the engines were ordered; but there was much delay, and we were anxious; what had happened? Had the engines fallen as a war prize to the Russian fleet? Finally a reassuring cable came, then the engines themselves; and now, as we write, the good ship is hauled up high and dry, the engines are being put in; and soon we hope to start out again. We thank God for this great help. We also thank those good friends at home who have let him use them to make this help possible.

Other plans have been developed, such as that for issuing in the year before us a small Christian paper for circulation in the islands, which shall act as a kind of a news-letter from the ship and the Christian world in general to isolated island homes. The first issue is to appear in a few days. A journey, too, at the request of the home Board, for purposes of consultation with our good missionaries in the Philippines, while cut short by the war, demanded time and strength.

Then, while we "heave to" for a moment and look back upon the ocean of God's mercy, despite the toil and difficulties of the voyage, we confidently run up our signal to the dear home folk, "Report me all well."

Beating to Windward



HE "Fukuin Maru" has been "beating to windward" this year. There has been too much leeway at times, strong currents have opposed us, heavy squalls have struck us, we must confess to a lack of care in our steering at times, yet tack and tack, persistently, steadily, we have been "beating to windward," so that through God's mercy we are able to report a distinct advance in our work.

Some people play to a purpose, while others work to none. A Bible woman played with some children. First there were five, then ten, twenty, thirty. Now there is a full-fledged kindergarten, with a daily attendance of sixty pupils and others waiting for lack of room. A special course of training given to this woman by Mrs. Thomson has laid us under renewed obligation to our ever willing Kobe friends. The kindergarten has been tested for ten months and seems destined to endure. Hitherto without an appropriation and living on "engine oil,"* etc., shall we apply for money to run it or stop it?

Last year we reported him as having been a "fighting man." He is that still, only the purpose of his fighting and his weapons have changed. We refer to our boatswain. Converted heart, soul and body, even we, at last, could not deny the change. We were lowering a boat together. He spoke of the meeting he had held the night before, we spoke of ours. "Bos'n, if you keep on like that we shall have to build you a mission ship," said we in jest. "Yes, a little one like that," said he, also in jest, pointing to a little native craft. That night we did some thinking. Long had we been puzzled as to the right way to deal with colportage work in the islands. Was not this the way? We planned, friends helped financially, and the result is a little vessel called the "Fukuin Maru No. 2." The boatswain is in charge of her, fighting a good fight of faith in colportage work.

What is a privilege to one may be none to another. September 15 was to us a day of great privilege in that on that day the first communion service in connection with the Inland Sea work was held. Under the kindly shelter of the beautiful mountains, lifting their heads high in praise to God who made them as a token of his abiding presence, we gathered on the deck of the little white ship with grateful hearts. There was no need, no desire, for eloquent words from the tongue of man to bring home to the twenty-two souls who partook of communion that day the import of this gathering as an evidence of God's mercy in breaking the silence of centuries in these dark islands. Each in his or her own way had been in the conflict and silently thanked God for the victory.

*Small savings from appropriations for operation of ship and for general work.

A roll-call at the year end may be well, especially if those concerned report before they are called. Thus we were grateful to find that during the Christmas season we either met or received letters from twenty-two of the twenty-three converts of the "Fukuin Maru." Of this number five are engaged in definite Christian work.

An increase in Sunday schools may mean little to those who work in large cities. To us here the opening of even one new one means, on the one hand, that a Bible woman or evangelist shall be willing to journey by boat in all weathers say ten miles, fifty-two times a year. On the other hand, it means that untold difficulties have been overcome, prejudices



STUDENTS OF A NAVIGATION SCHOOL ON THE INLAND SEA

removed and one more island community, composed of people proud of and *in* their independence and isolation, has come to consent gladly to the teaching of a new and hitherto hated religion to their children. Two new schools in important islands have been established during the year, while the attendance at others has increased.

Six weeks in dock under demand of a government official, heavy repairs and a heavy bill at the end of it all seemed a hopeless hindrance. We decided to make a bold bid and took the vessel for repairs to one of the most conservative places in the Inland Sea, expecting just what took place. What took place was an uproar. The people of the district blamed

the dock company for letting "that Jesus ship" in after they had for eight years, solidly, as one man, refused to give us room or hear us. The dock people, faithful to Japanese custom, using the well-worn phrase "*Shigataganai*" (It can't be helped) went on with the work. Meanwhile we lay low. We held no meetings, Oh no, not there! We just "played possum!" But the crew, after days of hard work, without any request from us, held meetings, eighteen in number. That, together with the Christian conduct of the crew and what they saw of the lives of the foreigners, down to little Evelyn, who would be friends with all, whether they chose or not, won over the district so completely that by special request we held a large and crowded meeting to wind up with, and had some 200 people out on the beach to bid us farewell as we sailed away. That is the entering wedge in a new district. We hope to drive it home later on.

But we must pay our debts — debts of gratitude. First, to the native workers for their faithfulness; then to the mission at large for sympathy and help; to our faithful friends and co-workers at Himeji, Mr. and Mrs. Briggs, who have rendered, unknown to others and often to ourselves, a thousand services; to a faithful partner in life, who has borne for Christ's sake what many women would shun; and last, but by no means least, to a faithful crew, once Satan's own tool, now a definite asset in mission work, — to all these we give thanks with a full heart. Having thus parceled out the work to those to whom we are indebted, there remains for us but a very small portion. We pray that God may make us more faithful to the trust committed to our care, so that when at length in life's voyage we "stand away" on the last "home stretch" it may be with the consciousness that through God's mercy your little white ship has been a messenger of salvation, joy and peace to many an island home.

Straws in the Tideway



STRAWS tell how the tide runs. An account of a three days' trip undertaken with the sole thought of meeting three Japanese co-workers for consultation, may tell something of the widespread influence of the "Gospel Ship."

January 6, 2 P.M. I reached Kobe from Himeji to join a steamer and meet an island convert who is an earnest worker and have news from him of another. 4 P.M. I enter the steamship office. An official at once asks, "Are you not from the 'Fukuin Maru?' Please come into the inner office." Then follows a talk on religious matters. Buying a ticket for Shozu Island, Sanuki

Province, I go on board and find three persons from the islands whom I know. The result is a four hours' religious talk until midnight with them and other passengers.

January 7. Landing at 1 A.M., I meet eight or ten persons in sampans (small boats), or at the landing, whom I know. I enter the local inn and meet others. At daylight I start across the island to Shimonura, four miles away, meeting farmers, business men, a teacher, a doctor, all of whom I know personally, and pass scores of houses I have personally visited. Arriving there I meet an evangelist and have a consultation, covering, among other things the family affairs of a number of houses the inmates of which, though not believers, are seeking advice and are personally known to me. Noon. Go three miles farther west to visit a home in which a death has taken place, meeting on the way men and women of all classes, personally known, and passing again scores of houses per-



CAPTAIN BICKEL STARTING ON A JOURNEY

sonally visited. 2 P.M. I pass on over the hills and see more villages, more people, more homes, all of which are known to me. 4 P.M. I reach the west end of this island and have a talk with people at the local inn who are all known to me. We are upstairs. Some children are outside in the street. Their voices reach us. One says, "The captain of the 'Fukuin Maru' has come." "Then let us start up a Sunday school hymn," says another. Thereupon they sing, "There is no name on earth so sweet." Meanwhile the talk goes on upstairs. 5 P.M. Go to landing to take a boat for Shikoku. Meet more acquaintances on the way to landing. While waiting for the boat a school teacher whom I know well comes running from the town. He has heard of my being in the island and comes to extract a promise to visit his village again, ten miles away, at an early date. Three others at the landing ask for a definite date as to the next coming of the ship. I enter a sampan to go on board the boat and

there meet a man from Shika Island. The "Fukuin Maru" meetings in his village are held in his house. He wants to have a talk regarding Christianity on the way over to Shikoku, two hours' run, but the captain, the purser, the engineer, all want to know where the "Fukuin Maru" is and how things are going, and there is no opportunity. The captain is a graduate of one of the nautical schools with which we have a special connection. My friend from Shika Island has to be disappointed. 7 P.M. Land in Sanuki Province. My friend had planned to remain over night in Takamatsu, but having lost his chance for a talk goes on with me by train and we have an hour of conversation on religious matters. 9 P.M. I meet my co-worker in charge of the little colportage vessel, "Fukuin Maru No. 2," Mr. Hirata, and have a consultation with him until 11.30 P.M., as to the spring work and the islands he shall visit. Midnight. Reach Tadotsu by rail. Am tired and wish to avoid places where I am known in order to be quiet. I pick out an inn and enter, only to be greeted as "from the 'Fukuin Maru.'" By the time I have had my talk with the people there, it is all but time to go on board the night boat.

January 8, 3 A.M. Go on board night boat to cross Inland Sea. As it is dark and the steamer a strange one, I expect to go on board unnoticed, but find as passengers two graduates of the Yugi Navigation School. The result is a long talk. 9 A.M. I land at Onomichi, and at once meet others whom I know. Visit the wife and child of one of the ship's converts in the hour I have to wait and then pass on. 11 A.M. Land at Itosaki and running the gauntlet of the shipping community meet a postal official, who at once wants to know of the ship's doing. A few steps farther on I meet the wife of a government surveyor who is deeply interested in Christianity, after which I meet and talk with a railway official. All this occurs while I wait for a steamer to take me to my real destination fifteen miles farther west. 2 P.M. Go on board steamer and meet others whom I know. 4 P.M. to midnight. I reach my real destination. The "Fukuin Maru" is anchored here. I go on board my own vessel, but hearing from those on board of the affairs of a family on shore I go to inquire. While talking to the man and his wife, word has gone out and though it is raining hard another and still another comes, until we have quite a gathering, and a long gospel talk is given. While this is going on a hurriedly written note is handed in from one of the local school teachers saying, "I hear you have just arrived. Will you not come and address my boys' club at their annual gathering?" This wish complied with, and after having a consultation with the sailor lad on night watch on the "Mission Ship" as to his family affairs, it is after midnight and bedtime.

January 9, 9 A.M. A Bible woman from another island who has come over by boat and hill road to hold a Sunday school comes on board. I

have a brief consultation with her and then plan to go over the hills to the east side of island to take a sampan from there to another island, carrying my baggage on my back. Stop to talk to one of my sailors about his entering the army and as to what he ought to study in order to be of greater use in the world when he comes out. In the midst of this a boat comes off and in it are the principal of a school well known to me, ten miles west, the village headman and two farmers. I have to shelve my plans and engagements in a straight gospel talk for two hours. Noon. Take another route to next island. On the boat meet more people whom I know. 6 P.M. Land and meet many whom I know, a *sake* brewer, a priest, a doctor, a merchant, a barber, a farmer, an official, a school teacher, etc., all to be met and a word given to them one way or another. Going on to the home of the evangelist in this place I have a consultation with him as to opening up a new field, etc. 9 P.M. Leave that island by boat for the mainland. On board the boat and in the train I meet people whom I know. All these meetings not only give an opportunity for religious talks, but the people ask for them. Taking the midnight train I reached Himeji at 5 A.M. next day.

This unembellished statement of a hurried trip to meet three men, and a trip which was taken largely over ground not actually touched by the ship's direct efforts and where the influence would be least felt, may give some idea of the widespread effect of the ship's efforts. The bare facts here crudely stated are but as "straws in the tideway," yet they may help some to see how the tide runs.

Is It Worth While?

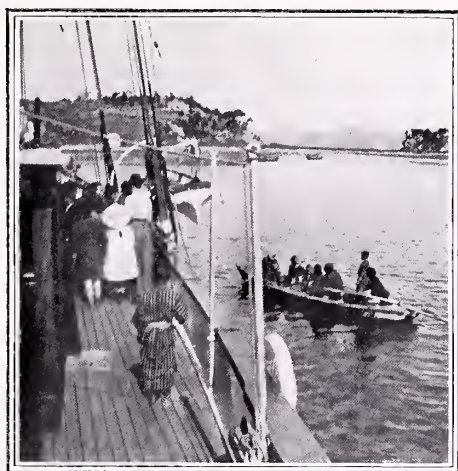


THEY had come and gone all day, a motley "Mission Ship" crowd, good, bad and indifferent, chiefly the latter. Some had been suavely pleasant, with a greasy graciousness that left a taste as of oil in our mouth. Others had been at no trouble to disguise the fact that to them the foreigner, though harmless enough, was little short of a fool, a legitimate object for grinning curiosity. Still another had "rice" writ large upon his dirty, greedy hands.

Yes, they had gone and we were just telling our own heart that we were not disappointed, when the little boatswain ushered in a young man. We knew him, — yes, as we sailors say, knew him "by the cut of his jib." Graduate of a higher educational institution on the mainland, he had returned to this his native island. The old folk had slaved that he might have such a chance, and now they and the simple villagers were under his

feet and the roads not quite wide enough to accommodate him when he walked abroad.

There was to be an exhibition of school work in the island. He had a beautifully written essay in English which he unblushingly vowed to have written himself, unassisted, and which we knew to have been copied verbatim from a certain author of note. When accused frankly of purloining he as unblushingly asked that, as it was to give him a good standing in the island, we write on the title page of his manuscript an endorsement of the lie he had told us. Resentment at the insult rose hot and fast. Prompt and frank was the refusal to endorse a lie that had not even the excuse of being "white." Yet just as quickly there welled up in our heart an overwhelming desire for this representative of a great class. Loosed



VISITORS COMING ABOARD THE "FUKUIN MARU."

from the restraints of olden day ethics, plunged into a veritable surf of new ideas, with nothing to fear but the law of the land, and with no God but the soulless, sin-bespattered god of selfishness, thousands of these young men are adrift in this land.

Who are we that we should forget God's mercy in giving us a Christian parentage? Who are we that we should judge harshly? Love and the pity of love came readily enough for the ignorant man of dirty garb and face who had just gone, even though his every bow spelled rice. Was our heart, then, so narrow, so little touched by the spirit of the Master as not to be able to take into it this modern Pharisee? All honor to those faithful brothers and sisters of ours on the mainland, who day by day, amid the grime of the great cities, bear patiently with thousands of souls such as

this. But is it worth while? The grinningly curious, the dirty man who wants rice, this modern Pharisee, — is it worth while to spend a life on them? In sheer disappointment and with a heavy heart we left the question unanswered.

The day was not yet done; another duty awaited us. Poor indeed had been the events of the day as a preparation for it. We must go to visit a dying Christian brother. We had not seen him for months. The grip of an intense suffering lay hard upon him we heard. Longing as we often long, that the old sailor in us could be turned by some means into the spiritual adviser and missionary we should be, and searching the corners of our soul for some message of comfort, we went.

The westerly wind with its bitterly cold bite howled about the little thatched-roofed cottage as if to emphasize the fact that life is a struggle. Was it all worth while? We pulled ourselves together, and inwardly got our words of comfort all set out in a row, with a sense of shame at our weakness. We were ushered into the presence of the dying man. And then — our lips were dumb. Our words of comfort, like some paltry wares which a merchant is ashamed to show, we kept stowed away. In the presence of a dying man? No, we were in the presence of the victorious spirit of the Master.

And who was this young man of thirty? An evangelist, Nagai Minoru by name. By his own confession a Pharisee of Pharisees, coming for what he could get, which in his case was for English.

But one day that miracle, wrought when God in Christ walked in tender pity among men, and rewrought again and again all through the centuries came to pass in him. The god of selfishness was cast out and Christ, gentle, pure, good, reigned supreme. And when laid upon his bed of suffering, the humble neighbors came and stood and wondered. “‘Tis like stories the priests tell us of the Buddhist saints who lived long ago, but *men* do not live and die like this.” And then he died — nay, nay, friend, not so. The gentle, humble spirit, dispensing lavishly comfort upon us all, passed from under the crude shelter of the thatched roof into the beautiful portals of the true home of such souls.

Then came the little boatswain from the ship to prepare for laying away the poor, worn body. We sat with bowed head in wonder. It seemed but yesterday when this sailor, almost naked, scrambled over the stern. He came for rice, straight and sure. Ignorant, mean, quarrelsome, he gambled, drank and did his worst, and then God’s spirit gripped him as it did the other, the educated Pharisee.

As he moved about gently, with a tact, wisdom and fine feeling we envied, taking quiet charge of all preparations and then turning to care with a woman’s tenderness for the bereaved mother and sister, we bowed

our head in shame. Is it worth while? The man who comes and mocks, the one who comes for rice, the Pharisee, is it worth while to spend a life on these? My God, my God, how could I doubt thee? Take my life and use it to the last shred for whomsoever thou wilt!

And then we carried him, the evangelist, out; no, not him, for he was not there; only the poor, weary body. There was no sorrow; how could there be, as we laid the body in the grave dug in the stern rock-soil of an island hill? We looked out on the blue waters where the little ship of the good message lay. We looked beyond and saw island upon island, each in its emerald setting. We looked beyond, and still beyond, to the snow-glistening hills of the mainland, and on again beyond the snow caps, and the eyes of faith prevailed over our dim mortal eyes. We saw the dear home land and it was to us more clear than ever before. Quietly the officiating evangelist's voice rose on the sunlit air. To the villagers the words came as some strange mystery, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." To us they brought a message sweet amid the strife of earth. Yes, it is worth while! May we believe it.

Women and Children of the Islands



ON the wooded hillsides, in the lowland fields, in the farmyards, in the shops, in the boats, at the looms, in the houses, young and bright, careworn and thoughtful, old and haggard, independent yet docile, hard-working and patient ever, they are here in their tens of thousands — these island women.

They are here in their hundreds of thousands, these island children, in the schools or more often not, in the homes or more often not, helping in the fields, romping under one's feet, playing "ride a horse to market" by order of parental authority, which in America would mean that eight-year-old Bill must nurse five-year-old Jack, Jack being tied to Bill's back in such a way as to present a strange mixture of legs and arms when Bill plays "hopscotch" as presently he does.

The workers of the "Fukuin Maru" have set themselves the task, *not* of giving a knowledge of Christian truth to certain portions of the population of this wide field, *not* to carrying on Christian work in certain important and accessible centers in certain islands, but to giving by persistent, systematic effort a knowledge of God and his love to every man, woman and child who can be persuaded or beguiled into listening to the message. That in such a vast undertaking work for women and children must have

a large part, need not be stated. That to attempt to meet the wide need by local efforts in the form of kindergarten work, women's societies, mothers' meetings, etc., would demand an expenditure and a staff of workers such as we dare not hope to see, is also apparent.

We had to plan for the women and children as we did for the men, on large, broad lines, seeking to reach all in some way, while not neglecting those whose heart attitude might claim special attention and help.

It is true that we have two "Yugiin," a type of kindergarten not needing an expensive plant. These are doing a successful work. One is situated in the East Central Island Division at Setoda, the other in the Western Island Division at Agenoshio, a town of ten thousand inhabitants.



CAPTAIN BICKEL AND SUNDAY SCHOOL ON THE "FUKUIN MARU"

Both are carried on in the spacious local preaching places. The workers of both are engaged in Bible women's and Sunday school work, going often ten or fifteen miles in all manner of weather in a small sampan to hold a children's meeting, or women's meeting, after the kindergarten work in the forenoon is over, or on Sundays. It is true that mothers' meetings and women's societies have been formed in some places by the evangelists' wives and the kindergarten workers. It is true that in another place a boys' and girls' night school is carried on, and in another a sewing class. We rejoice in these and long to have more such efforts made. That they are not made is due to lack of means and the vastness of the field.

But our hope is not in these things, good as they are. It is in the work of public appeal and teaching. This is the widespread and general work

and mainstay, while the other work, that of the kindergarten, women's societies and mothers' meetings is but incidental and local. Women and children are present in their thousands in the meetings held by the ship in the four hundred towns and villages visited. In these meetings a point is made of having a special talk for children before the large general meeting is held. Women and children by their thousands are in the meetings held in the fifty regular preaching places to which the evangelists itinerate. Women and children in their thousands visit the ship and hundreds come to special women's or children's meetings held on board. Children in their hundreds attend the special children's meetings on Sunday school lines held by the worker in the colportage vessel "No. 2 Fukuin Maru." These children's meetings, held in many places where no regular Sunday school is yet established, are a great feature in the island work.

Children in hundreds, yes, and women too, attend regularly the forty Sunday schools established in as many towns and villages in the islands. In these Sunday schools there is uniform instruction based on a series of scripture lesson cards, specially prepared, published and sent out from the ship. These Sunday schools are, moreover, not what are known as "Street Sunday schools." We know these scholars and their parents and have access to their homes, as we have to a thousand other homes, and we have their confidence.

We are no longer doing mission work with strangers, for in many places the ship and its workers are a part of the village life. To create this confidence we have toiled for years in these islands, but the result of the toiling and the possibilities opening before us on every hand cannot be expressed in words. We will mention but a few of the evidences of these results, taken at random.

Whereas we reported ten organized Sunday schools last year, and twenty-six in January this year, we now have forty fully organized and requests in hand from over twenty other towns and villages for the establishment of regular Sunday school work as opposed to the periodical children's meetings. Were means available these would be established within a month and more would rapidly follow. Two thousand people were gathered in a recent Sunday school rally, the banners of eleven Sunday schools from eleven different islands floating bravely in the breeze at a place where not long since we were refused even houseroom. This is but an example of changed conditions.

A number of girls have been induced to seek education in various Christian schools on the mainland and have become Christians there. Girls and boys and young women have been introduced to permanent Christian influences. The wrongs and sufferings of many women in

island homes have been adjusted, and others saved from serious temptation and wrong.

Eight thousand people were gathered in our impressive Sunday school services at Christmas, hearing an earnest presentation of the old story of the revelation of God's love in the coming of the Christ Child. These are but a few examples, the work is so widespread that they could be indefinitely multiplied.

The work, then, in these islands for women and children must be regarded as simply an adjunct to the general work of evangelization. It is a large and vital part of a far-reaching, all-embracing plan on inductive lines to lead the island people up out of the deep depths of prejudice and superstition, from out of a death in life such as those who do not live in touch with it cannot comprehend, to the moral and spiritual heights of a knowledge of God and his love and pardon revealed in Christ. And if in these islands the love, the tenderness, the purity, the suffering of the Man of Galilee appeal most readily to the children and women, what wonder? Has it not been ever so, from the day when children sang hosannas by the way, from the day when women wept and watched at the foot of his cross? In all lands and at all times to the present day they have most readily responded to his call. May God give us wisdom and power, yes, and a Christ-like, all-embracing love that we may be able to lead these island women and children to their Father's home.

The First Ten Years on the Inland Sea



TEN years ago I sailed the "Fukuin Maru" out of Hiogo Bay to a task the difficulties of which though known only in part made me shrink. In view of these difficulties I made the following statement in writing to the home Board at the time: "I will work night and day as God gives me strength for ten years without looking for visible results," and I added that any other attitude on my part to so great a task would probably mean either serious disappointment or superficial work.

The difficulties were of many kinds; no small share of them were and are now due to the plan of work which in its general outline was then deliberately made and has been persistently adhered to, though the details have been a growth.

In general the rules that I made were as follows:

1. "The ship shall never undertake work in any place where any

other denomination has permanent work. The work shall all be advance work." While this rule has brought us as a mission certain privileges in the islands, it would be worse than valueless if it failed to impress us with the serious responsibilities which it involves, that of giving by well-ordered, effective effort the gospel to the people and *all* the people of the places for which we assume responsibility.

2. "The ship shall go to every village on every island known or unknown and persist in Christian effort until by general consent of the people the vessel and its message are welcome." This has not been the usual method of work in Japan. Largely as the outcome of conditions it has been the custom to follow some invitation or opening. The result has been a doubling up in many places and an utter neglect in others. What the persistent following of this rule has cost in the face of the criticism of those who regarded it as a visionary method and the temptation to seek so-called success in the form of immediately visible results by picking out certain promising places, no one can fully realize. But I thank God that he put it into my heart to persist in adhering to this rule, thus laying the broad foundations which we now have for future work. This foundation lies in the systematic raising up, from out of the slough of prejudice and superstition, the minds and hearts of *a whole people* to a place of higher vision without which there can be no general acceptance of Christian truth.

3. "While giving honor to whom honor is due, to bear in mind at all times that the gospel is for all men alike, irrespective of class distinctions." Owing largely to special developments at the time of the beginning of mission work in Japan, work for certain classes has had overdue emphasis. Precedent was all in favor of beginning with those in higher positions in the islands, officials, teachers, doctors and educated men, of whom there are in the islands many more than is generally supposed. The permit from the government under which the ship sails pointed to easy access along these lines. It was a temptation. A chance word from an islander was, I believe, used of God to give me the needed warning. This man had been to the mainland and said to me, "I went to the services in the church at Okayama. I was much interested, but how is it that the people who attend are almost all minor officials, professional men and young students? Is Christianity for these alone?" Knowing that of many places this was true, I set my face against it and avoiding, though not refusing official help, sought entrance by the will of the people as a whole. The result as seen now in the presence of these very men in our meetings is a cause for deep gratitude to God who has led aright.

4. "After ensuring a welcome, to divide the islands into groups. Stationing an evangelist in each group, make him responsible for all

work carried on in his group." The thought here was to throw responsibility in an ever-increasing measure upon the native workers, to make them feel that they are missionaries rather than helpers of a missionary and to urge them by word and example to strenuous, evangelistic, initiative effort within the limits of the groups for which they are responsible. A large amount of testing and much leading out of preconceived ideas as to the amount of work reasonably to be expected of a worker has taken time and strength, but has finally been successful, so that today on the older fields my hands are freer than ever before and I may more reasonably look to the regions beyond.

5. "To insist that the number of paid workers in a given district be limited and to insist upon the duty of every believer to bear a share in the work of spreading the gospel by personal activity of some kind." Old customs and newer precedent have been dead against me here. The Buddhist priest of standing, the teacher of repute, remained in his temple or home and received those who sought his advice. Preaching, moreover, and teaching was the work of a class. This goes deeper than those at home can believe. All thought that believers should believe, the teachers be teachers. Missionaries on the mainland have suffered and struggled over this with workers and Christians alike. I tried to begin aright. Often I have been on the point of wavering. Custom and precedent were so strong, the hundreds of villages so needy. Yet the ideal seemed and seems right, every Christian a worker, and I still hold to it. The number of workers is desperately small, but slowly, very slowly, the unpaid workers are coming out and I still live in hope that the long struggle may result in a strong, self-reliant church membership.

Adhering to these rules, the islands were divided into groups and an evangelist stationed in each group. The ship goes to a group and takes the local evangelist on board. The evangelist going with me, I visit every village in that group. Large public meetings are held in houses, theatres, schools, temples, hospitals and factories, or, if need be, in the open air in farmyards or on the beach. The attendance varies from one hundred and fifty to five hundred persons. Large quantities of literature are carefully distributed. Those interested are visited or come on board, for further instruction. To carry out this work it was at first necessary to walk over steep and difficult hill paths on an average of over three thousand miles a year. This has been largely done away with of late by the use of a twenty-five foot motor launch attached to the ship, which was the thoughtful gift of the donor of the "Fukuin Maru."

Special services for inquiries are held on the ship's deck. The addresses at the public meetings are all carefully planned and systematized, one, two, three. The literature is carefully selected and graded, one, two, three again.

When the ship passes to another group, the evangelist is left behind. He itinerates once in a month to fifteen or twenty of the most important places in his group, besides holding regular services in his own center. Thus divided into four groups, four hundred places are being dealt with. Twenty of these have permanent hired houses or houses lent by the villages.

Persons specially interested are listed, and being personally known to the workers, have suitable literature and at times letters sent them by mail. Of such persons there are seven hundred on the ship's list. Specially responsive places have special attention given them. For certain people suitable additional efforts are made in such a way as not to interfere with the general meetings. Thus at one time twenty or thirty school teachers gather on deck for a service, again a like number of students, or a large number of children.

While the direct presentation of Christian truth through addresses, stereopticon lectures and private talks is the mainstay of this work, auxiliary agencies have no unimportant share. There are twenty-seven regularly organized Sunday schools. Added to these are many children's meetings on Sunday school lines held on any day of the week. A kindergarten with fifty pupils enrolled and a night school with forty are doing a quiet work. The ship's newspaper, a purely evangelistic sheet, is written with the thought ever in mind that the island people and those who sail in the ship are, as is actually true in many cases, bound by personal friendship. This goes out by mail to hundreds of homes, emphasizing that which has been taught in the meetings. The ship's Scripture Calendar, specially designed and edited, accompanied by a letter signed by all the workers, is much appreciated and is in evidence all the year through in some seven hundred homes. Small loan libraries, placed in responsive villages to a limited number, also help to turn the minds of some to higher things.

A recent addition to our forces is to be found in the small vessel called the "Fukuin Maru No. 2," built in Japanese style. This vessel is engaged in colportage work, undertaken with the same adherence to a definite plan as the efforts of the larger vessel. The man in charge is not simply a Bible-seller, but is one who, by preaching and teaching, leads young and old to an appreciation of the book he so deeply loves. He it is who holds day after day the children's meetings mentioned above. His evenings are usually devoted to meetings for older people.

Thus the tenth year has been reached. It is as though God had dealt with me according to my faith. The tenth year has been a remarkable one. The end of the ninth presented rather more difficulties than are usual even here. The dawn came with the tenth. Quietly, steadily

there appeared a widespread awakening of interest, a welcome beyond our usual welcome, a turning from good-natured tolerance to definite requests for regular preaching places, request after request, ten, twenty, thirty from all parts of the field that Sunday schools be established; people hitherto holding aloof coming boldly to the meetings; a strange need to be in a number of places at once or at least to travel far more rapidly than heretofore in order to meet special demands for meetings or consultations. All this and more has been true during this tenth year. The first church was formed; the number of regular preaching places



ON THE "FUKUIN MARU"

in hired houses or those set aside for our use by the village has been increased; the itinerating of evangelists has increased; the number of Sunday schools raised from eleven to twenty-seven, and the Christians, though few in number, have taken fresh heart. We close the year with ten persons definitely waiting for baptism.

No better indication of the spirit of the year could be given than the experiences of the last Christmas season. With all secular elements barred and a deep spiritual meaning pervading all, the coming of the

Saviour was celebrated in all our permanent preaching places. The attendance at these meetings alone was no less than 8,000 persons.

It is a God-given hold we have upon the many towns and villages in this wide field. I thank God for this tenth year with its promise far above all other years. May he grant me to be faithful in the years to come.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

What, then, as to plans for the future? They are simple enough. Let me divide them under these headings: (1) intensive work, (2) extensive work, (3) equipment.

1. As to intensive work, I desire to meet the many requests for permanent preaching places, Sunday schools and inquirers' classes by placing a sub-worker or assistant in each group. This would mean the opening up of regular preaching places and organized Sunday schools in forty additional towns and villages from most of which definite requests have come.

2. As to extensive work, my desire and hope is to take the next logical step in the original plan by opening up permanent work in the Goto Islands. It is strange yet significant that on my way to the last Reference Committee meeting, where I laid these plans before the committee, I had word from the Minister of Communications asking why it was that I had had these and other islands on my cruising permit during ten years and had not yet taken up work there. I have just sent a full report as to our gradually working out a definite and wide plan and stating that I hoped soon to be able to open up permanent work in the Goto Islands.

3. The question of getting over the ground more rapidly has become serious. A mistake was made in building a sailing vessel in the beginning, and that mistake has been a costly one. The auxiliary engine put in later has been a help; but conditions have changed more rapidly than even I dared to hope. The work has passed the experimental stage. The need for more rapid movements is daily more pressing. A more powerful engine would meet this need, but in the vessel as she is now there is not room for such an engine. The absence of a small assembly room on board becomes more and more a drawback. Again, accommodation for a permanent evangelistic worker who shall also be a personal helper on board is badly needed. Such a worker would mean that I could increase my public meetings by sending the evangelist in charge of the group with a member of the crew in one direction and taking the ship's evangelist with me in another. Thus I should be able to gather say 60,000 people into meetings annually as compared with say 40,000 now. The aid of

a personal helper is becoming more and more pressing, as correspondence in the vernacular and preparation of literature and business items increase.

To accomplish all this I desire to be enabled to lengthen the ship by twenty-five feet, thoroughly overhaul her and by rearrangement of space find room for a larger engine, an assembly room, and more evangelist's accommodation. To lengthen the vessel would in many ways be more advantageous than building a new vessel. The saving of lengthening over building would probably not be more than Yen 5,000, but lengthening will avoid complications of registration; it will preserve the asset of sentiment existing here in the islands in so large a degree and possibly in some measure at home. It will, moreover, preserve the ship as a token of Mr. Allan's generous gift and the memorial nature of that gift, without which gift and interest the wide influence in which we now rejoice would have been impossible. My plan would be to get all ready to put together while going on with the use of the vessel, thus losing only a short period as to the active use of the vessel. As the building would be done on one of the islands, mission work could be carried on in some measure in the neighborhood during construction so that little time would be lost.

I do not forget that the work under my care is but a very small corner of the wide field. Neither should I wish to have my hopes fulfilled to the detriment of other needy fields. I submit these plans at a time when there is every indication that the work is entering upon a new stage of development, believing that a wish exists to make wise provision for gathering in the fruitage of the careful seed-sowing which has taken place on this now promising field.

An Island Story



YOUNG man from one island heard the gospel from the ship's workers in another island. He was impressed, or rather aroused to opposition, studied the Bible for some time in order the better to oppose it, was finally converted and returned to his home. Rumors had gone before him. The village was ready to oppose him. "*Yaso*, had he not joined *Yaso*?" Fearlessly he confessed that he

had, and though he belonged to one of the leading families, the verdict was that he must "move on." The opposition was headed by one of his former schoolmates, a young man of good character and standing. This young man, as spokesman of the village demanded, "Give up this hated

thing or leave the village." My friend smiled, and said quietly, "Well and good, I will go, but first let me tell you what I believe so that you and I too may know just why I am expelled."

That night, armed with his Bible he met the village assembly. He was shrewd. He soon had them engaged in a hot argument more among themselves than with him, as to the merits of Christianity and the claims of the Bible. My friend kept them at it till midnight, and then suggested another session for the following night. This was held, and then another, and still another, by which time the village was divided into two camps by natural process. My friend then used the favorable party to start a Sunday school. His former schoolmate's hatred grew with the heat of argument, and he vowed to wipe out the disgrace that had come to the village through the introduction of the hated foreign religion, and the book which teaches it. The Christian replied that he would pray that God might lead him to love that Book and its teaching as he had himself come to do.

Soon after, this schoolmate was drafted into the army and sent to Manchuria. There to his intense disgust the sergeant under whom he drilled and worked day by day proved to be a devout Christian. This sergeant gave him a Testament, and talked to him. Being afraid of incurring the displeasure of his superior he hid his hatred as best he could, but resolved to destroy the Book as soon as he was free from service.

Just before being ordered home he and others were doing a little looting. He entered a Chinese house, and seeing a scroll on the wall was struck with its beauty, and above all with the words written upon it. He rolled it up and hid it under his tunic and so brought it home as a memento.

The village was proud of its soldier son. The usual feast of welcome was held on his return. My friend, the Christian, also went to the reception. The returned soldier received the congratulations of the villagers, and then proceeded to show them his memento, saying that the words on the scroll were most beautiful.

My friend, the believer, listened for a while in silence to the admiring comments, and finally said, "These are indeed most beautiful words, but do you know where they come from? They are not as you suppose the words of some Chinese sage, they are taken from this 'Jesus Book' which you so groundlessly hate and oppose."

The ex-soldier was deeply impressed. He afterwards came to my friend, the Christian, and said, "I surrender, I surrender! That God of yours and that Book of yours find me out wherever I go. Now I will try to know them. In fact, in some measure I already know them,

through the life and words of the sergeant under whom I served." He thereupon sought further instruction, and is now waiting for baptism, while my friend, the Christian, who, by the way, is the clerk of our little "Fukuin Maru" church, is preparing to enter the theological seminary.

What the Tears Meant



He came in through the hawsepipe," is a suggestive nautical phrase. My friend Hirata San did not, he came in over the stern, literally, and as some visitors to the "Mission Ship" after a prolonged stay do not know one end from the other let me say by way of explanation that it was the other! The day was cold, a good winter snap was on. That fact presupposed clothes! All he had to support the dignity of his allegiance to the Mikado was half a shirt and a loin cloth, things acquired, and a shock of hair thrown in by nature. He turned his toes in and made obeisance most eloquently. His bow fairly spoke. It said, "I'll do you first chance I get, and I won't be long in getting one." His crafty eyes looked straight in the direction of the eight cardinal points of the compass all at once. He claimed consideration on the ground that he had a brother in the ship. That only made things worse. The brother was bad enough in all conscience. No, we did not want him. But he kept his eight-point eyes on us, and the next time we needed a man he was there waiting.

Well, he had one virtue at least, he was openly, cheerfully evil. He and the devil went watch and watch. He gambled, stole and lied by preference. He drank heavily and loved to fight, for was he not a "jiu-jitsu" expert of seven years' training. All this he did and worse.

Man has a soul they say. We tried to find his, tried for two years, but never got a glimpse. He came to the ship's daily worship with the rest, bowed his head like a saint and looked out of his eight-point eyes at the rest of the crew all at once with a wink to which they responded. When it was all over they went away forward and laughed at the fun. Being of sailor build, we had seen a craft or two since we sailed deep water, but for straight evil doing the "Mission Ship" outsailed them all. Morally, spiritually, it was bedlam with the lid off, and our friend was the man who held the lid. But used to a hard road though we were our heart was sore at the condition of things. What had we come for but to change such men as these, and yet change there was none. Long and deep were the searchings of heart. Did we so utterly fail to represent the Master that these men were not held in check, by shame at least, if not by conviction?

This lasted two years, and then something happened. One of the men fell overboard in a winter gale and was drowned. God used this to move our friend's heart. He began to inquire, but how? Must he learn English? No. Would he not have to go to school and study before he could find any help from Christianity? So little impression had the two years on the ship made! Ignorant to the extent of not being able to read or write the simple Japanese "Kana" alphabet, morally crooked in all his ways, was there any hope of his being changed! In deep disappointment, almost with disgust we answered his inquiries. We did not believe him sincere then nor did we later on when he professed faith in Christ.

We refused baptism, but there was a change, even we could not deny it; yes, a change at last, slight indeed, but growing in force continually until the old man became completely new. No mere figure of speech or saintly cant is this, but hard solid fact. He was changed from a gambling, lying, thieving, quarrelsome, ignorant tool of the evil one to a true child of God. No miracles these days, say some! No, not if this is not one. The quarrelsome man became the peacemaker, and the man of evil life the example of all. So far so good!



THE CABIN OF THE "FUKUIN MARU"

"Captain," said an islander one day, "I enjoyed the talk immensely last night."

"Whose talk?"

"Why Hirata San, as you know, has been preaching every night for a week in this village." As a matter of fact we did not know. That was the beginning but by no means the end. In the measure of the previous degradation was his conviction of sin. In the measure of this conviction

were his appreciation of God's wondrous mercy and his longing to render service of love.

We tried to teach him but failed. He was outside our methods somehow. But he pored over the old Book of books in every spare moment, and so we left him to God's spirit. The harsh hands became gentle in service for others. The pride of other days became loving humility that would not be refused. The shrewdness of evil times turned to a remarkable thoughtfulness and resourcefulness in finding ways of service. Added to all he developed a remarkable ability to hold a mixed audience with his powerful presentation of God's love and mercy.

Long had we desired some systematic plan for colportage work in the islands. A word spoken in jest gave the needed clue. We were lowering a boat together. "How did you fare with your meeting last night," we asked.

"Oh, very well indeed," said he. "We shall have to get you a little mission ship," said we in jest, "if you keep on like this."

"Yes," said he, in jest also, pointing to a little Japanese sailing craft, "one like that."

That night we did some thinking and praying. The result, together with the generosity of some friends, was that a little vessel was built and Hirata San was placed in charge of her to carry on colportage work in the many islands we visit.

When the little ship was launched we stood on the beach and watched him as he worked up to his waist in water. The tears were streaming down his face as he worked. He was overwhelmed with the thought of God's mercy in bringing him up out of the depths. A foreman shipwright stood by who had known him of old and said, "Let him alone, he has a vile temper. He is so mad that the tears are running down his face, because the vessel is stuck a bit on the chocks. He is dangerous at such times."

Three years later that same foreman was baptized, having been led to Christ by our friend. After a most astonishing profession of faith made before the believers assembled on the "Fukuin Maru's" deck, he suddenly turned to us and said, "And, Captain, I now know what those tears meant."

Hirata San, the gentle, humble, ever-faithful servant of God and his fellow men, still lives and serves. May God grant him many days.

How He Became Pastor



TOURISTS visiting the Hongwanji Temple at Kyoto, are shown great ropes made of human hair. These represent the offerings of thousands of Buddhist women. Chief among the contributing women were those of Goshu. Ito Minosuke was born there. He was a strongly religious man, a religious zealot. A strong Buddhist was he, of the militant type. He was prominent as a lay-leader in Buddhist circles and head of a Buddhist young men's league. True he drank like the proverbial fish, and led such a life that the parents of his wife, into whose family he had been adopted, forbade him the house and divorced him. All this was openly done and known. Still if anyone thinks this need interfere with his being a religious man and even a leader, that person knows little of the ways and thoughts, social and religious, of the East.

His zeal was great. The religion of his fathers and their fathers was in danger. A great enemy had appeared. The religion of the uncouth foreigner threatened to undermine the faith of the faithful. Something must be done. A Laymen's Movement was planned. The recognition of Buddhism as the state religion of Japan was the one hope. Consultations were many and great. Amid much feasting and drinking great plans were made. A delegation must go to Tokyo and interview the political leaders. For this purpose much "Honorable Thanks Money" would be needed. This was collected from the faithful. Ito San, defender of the faith of his fathers, was one of the delegates.

Tokyo was reached and the "Honorable Thanks Money" applied to the consciences of many men as thanks for services hoped for. Now the art of a half promise, procrastination with ample excuses and profuse apologies, postponement and final evasion is one highly developed in the Orient far and near. Thus the delegation, after delivering itself of the "Honorable Thanks Money," made up its mind to await developments and incidentally to have a good time.

This was the undoing of our friend Ito San, in so far as the faith of his fathers went. While he waited a lady missionary held a meeting in the very lodging house in which he lived. He went to hear and oppose, only to be stricken in conscience and to see himself as a blind leader of the blind. He was converted, thoroughly converted. His conscience being quickened, he was at once shut off from bribes and emoluments by his own act. But he must live. He therefore joined the Tokyo police force. His zeal in service and his witness to the new light in his soul soon gave him the name of "Yaso no omari san," the "Jesus Bobby."

His activity as a Christian led to the thought that he might be made a useful worker. He was sent first to the "Fukuin Maru," and then to the Seminary in Yokohama. Now some folk sum up a missionary's duties in about the following words: "Beat a drum, shout hallelujah, get some people converted and then go on to the next batch!" Never a greater mistake was made. Setting aside the question of the propriety of drum beating and hallelujah, it is just after conversion that the work begins, especially in regard to those who are to be leaders. Some are all fight and lack sense. That means not work, Christian work, but a row. Some are all fears and misgivings and call it modesty. Some cannot steer a straight course, but run after fads and "isms," and call it special piety or consecration. Some play the fiddle of independence or nationalism and lose all sense of proportion and balance. To guide, to encourage, to restrain with gentleness, at times with severity if need be, but always with love; being ready to risk resentment and misunderstood motives, until these children become established in the faith, that they again may safely lead others, *this* is one most important part of a true missionary's work, and is often a long and weary process. This work was needed with our friend Ito San, and badly needed, but the reward of those who bore with him and led him is great, and for their patience we give thanks to God today.

After faithful, valuable service in Yokohama as evangelist in charge of the Mission Hall in which many through his zeal were led to Christ, he came to the islands of the Inland Sea. Here as pastor of the "Fukuin Maru" Baptist Church, he is loved and esteemed by his co-workers, by the believers, and by the island people at large, for he has now not only zeal coupled with judgment, but he has also a broad, deep sympathy for those who err, be their errors those of conduct or of faith. He himself had erred grievously, erred both in conduct and faith, and having been led by the love of Christ and the example of God's children to better and higher things, his words and deeds are those of one who has passed through the refining fires of experience. They hit home.

Out of the Depths



HIBATA OTOYE by name, he was manager of a modest export firm belonging to his uncle. He felt he was on top. All he had to do was to manage, and have a good time. He did; he drank, gambled and played up generally. He did it all with a will, he made debts to the tune of Yen 10,000 with his uncle's money, and then stepped down and out. He went from bad to worse, becoming a "Soshi," a type of semi-political rough and blackmailer. Down the steep ladder to perdition he went, helter-skelter, until finally one cold winter night, clothed in nothing but a thin summer garment, the last thing left to him, he laid his head upon the rails some miles outside of Tokyo and waited for the coming of the train that should put an end to his misery.

The train being late his mind reviewed his life. It was wasted, useless. He had never been a Buddhist. Of "Shizoku" rank, he had been taught chiefly on the lines of Confucianism. Like a dimly flickering lamp a special thought had always been present with him regarding the meaning of "ten" and "tentei" in the teaching of the great sage of Cathay. With his head pillowed upon the rails, as he looked up to the stars, he felt that *if* this "tentei" meant, as some said, a being of power above, an unseen ruler of the universe, then what good could it do, by way of restitution for an ill-spent life, to throw that life away as it was now.

But how could he change? What hope was there? Had he not tried and failed? Then he remembered that some one had said that the "Yaso" people, the Christians, dealt with such as he.

He was seized with a sudden desperate hope, jumped up and ran. He was weak for lack of food, but ran till he reached the confines of the great city, and then day dawned and he, being ashamed, hid himself away till night. When night came, slinking along under the eaves of the houses, he sought a Christian church. He saw a well-lit building. Forgetful of all but his own misery he plunged in, and going to the very front listened in astonishment. The sermon ended, he was so overcome that he forgot those around him and rushing to the platform asked the preacher who had told him of his life and doings. The preacher said he did not know him, and asked what his name might be. "But you do know me, for you have told my whole life story. My name is Shibata Otoyé."

"What," said the preacher, "are you he? Your mother is a member here, and has been praying for you and so have we all, that God might find you out."

“There must be some mistake, my mother is not a Christian, though, of course, I have not seen or heard of her for four years or more, nor she of me. She is a strong Buddhist.”

“Yes, yes, your mother was that, it is true. She fasted and chastised herself, often subjecting herself to the most painful form of the ‘Honorable Hundred Penances’ that you might be saved, but finding no help or peace she was led here by a friend two years ago. Since then she has been pleading with God for your salvation not knowing whether you lived or not.”

Thus Shibata San first turned to the light. Temptations were hard and many. How should he live? No one would trust him, for had he not been a “Soshi” of the worst type? He found work as a laborer in a printing office, and sought permission of the proprietor to learn typesetting after closing time. He did, and became a compositor. He was so overwhelmed with God’s mercy in saving him that he felt he must work for others. This he did so effectually that his brother, a Christian, urged him to devote all his time to preaching while he, the brother, worked and supported them both.

Thus he preached here and there in many places with such success that his church urged him to take charge of a chapel as a regularly-recognized evangelist. This he longed to do but felt he could not do so with the stain on his character of a Yen 10,000 debt, the result of evil living, still unpaid. While praying and trying to decide how to give a final reply to the church, he received a letter from his uncle who was then not yet a Christian. The uncle said he had heard of the great change that had taken place in him and as a token of the joy at this change, he enclosed a clean receipt for the Yen 10,000 debt! With tears of gratitude Shibata San wrote his letter of acceptance to the church.

He has been an earnest, faithful, effective worker for years now, and has led many to Christ. We value him much in the “Fukuin Maru” work. What higher praise of him can there be than to say that as it was with the Master so it is with him; the common people hear him gladly. And if as he speaks of God’s love at times the tears well up unbidden, what wonder, for some of us that have had much forgiven, love much, and what more noble tears can a man shed than tears of love and gratitude?

“He Wore Two Swords”



ODA KUSHIRO wore two swords. That meant rank in those days. It meant that he was of “Shizoku” family. His father was “Gokaro,” chief minister of the Echigo, feudal lord. The father died just before the rebellion, ’67-’71. The son fought a hard, losing fight. He became one of those who would not be reconciled, even after defeat. Associated with a band of others, some of them today prominent men, he plotted the overthrow of the Imperial power. They plotted the burning and destruction of temples containing Imperial graves. He and two others were caught in the act and imprisoned for three years. At the end of that time the other two were beheaded, but by some influence still unknown to him he was released.

The band then plotted the destruction of the Imperial ministers. He went at night to visit some of his colleagues who had, contrary to orders, too hastily attacked one of the ministers and dumped him into the Tokyo castle moat as dead, though he afterwards recovered. He was followed and seized and again imprisoned. He had on his person the contract of the confederates to which everyone had affixed a “Keppan” or blood seal. This he managed to get into his mouth and chew up. He was tortured in order to make him tell who his associates were, but rather than do so, sought to take his own life. His method was original. He stood before the judge, behind a heavy lacquered beam or bar, with hands bound to his hips, as a sign that he was a political prisoner, a soldier standing guard beside him. Suddenly raising his foot he kicked the attendant guard in the pit of the stomach and thus gaining time, dashed his head against the heavy lacquered bar with all the force of a powerful body in the hope of ending life and saving his friends.

He was unconscious for two days but was revived. Evidence failing, he was tortured again, but without avail, and after some months was set free. Still unconvinced of the futility of his cause he plotted further, finally being hunted and hounded in the hills as an outlaw. According to all accounts, however, he was through all this a man of high ideals and clean personal life, his one failing being an inherited liking for the brew of his fathers — “sake,” plus a good appetite. The former has long since been set aside, the latter still holds sway in a healthy body.

Now even outlaws need food and one with a physique like Toda San’s needs a double portion. The hills afforded meagre pickings. The Capital looked promising, but dangerous unless, perchance, he behaved himself politically. Hunger drove him in one night and Providence did the rest, by letting him turn a corner in the dark and run bodily into and

half over an old chum of slighter build. The old chum looked hale and hearty. Toda San looked worried and as lean as a naturally heavy man can look.

The chum took Toda San home and asked him how he fared. He confessed to being at the old patriotic game and, rather resenting the cheerful smile of his chum, asked him what *he* was doing. The answer put new life into Toda San, in that he took to his legs forthwith as though the evil one were after him. He would have escaped, but for his friend's restraining hand. The cause of his intended flight was that his chum



TODA SAN

had cheerfully confessed to having become a Christian. To have forsaken the cause was bad enough, but to have become a Christian was to add treachery to treachery!

To make a long story short, the Christian's love prevailed, the hard heart was softened. The love of Christ entered the heart, giving a new view-point, new ideals, new hope, new life. Toda San became a Christian and later on a Christian worker. He has two wounds. One is a great scar into which you can lay three fingers, on the calf of his leg. He got this in the rebellion, when the other fellows got the whip hand, and having

ambushed him, whittled a piece out of him before he fought his way through. He is proud of it, but he is more so of a finger half bitten off by a man who fiercely attacked him while as a soldier of the King of Kings he was proclaiming the love of the crucified and hated "Yaso." The man was imprisoned, but Toda San visited him and led him to Christ. The same spirit that of old did not let him know when he was beaten has caused him in the name of the Lord of Hosts to hold on in places where others would have given up the fight long since.

A Letter to Friends at Home



AM told that the little, white ship has a host of friends in America. For this I am grateful. They will wish to hear how we are faring. I wonder whether you think as I do that it is great fun to see things made or see them grow? The work of the "Fukuin Maru" has been growing for quite a while. Eleven years ago there was nothing but a little, white ship picking her way among the islands at the eastern end of the Inland Sea. The night was dark, very dark, as she crawled up under the still darker shadow of a high mountain and dropped anchor.

Not only the night was dark, however, but the prospects before us were darker still. The difficulties seemed as high as the high mountain under which the little ship lay, and truly they were. I was among a strange people of whose language I did not know enough to ask for bread and butter, had there been any, which there was not. The islands, the towns and villages, the mountain paths, the channels and sweeping tides, the rocks and shoals and winds, all these were unknown, untried. But above all, not a soul did I know in this wide stretch of islands, the hearts of whose hundreds of thousands of people I had been sent to try to reach. So the night was dark, indeed, and the misgivings of your old sailor friend made it seem darker still.

The next day brought my first visitor. He was a policeman. He was so full of dignity that he lost his balance in the "sampan" and tumbled overboard sword, dignity and all. His visit was the beginning. But how things have grown! We are all so busy that I fail to send word to our host of friends in America as often as I wish to and ought to. We have ever so many friends here now, but that only warms our hearts to the friends at home. Tens of thousands of people have come to us and we have visited tens of thousands more.

We have meetings large and many on the ship, and in the villages; meetings for little folk and big folk, for all manner of special folk and for

the people altogether. There is the little, white ship which is the mother of it all; she is busy, ever busy, while the little launch attached to her runs hither and thither between rock and shoal, night and day, on all manner of errands in the name of the King of Love. She alone travels about three thousand miles a year. Then there is the little "No. 2 Fukuin Maru," built in Japanese style, all up at one end and down at the other. This vessel does special colportage work and holds children's meetings.

Four hundred towns and villages are now on the ship's visiting list. These are divided into four groups. A Japanese evangelist has charge of each group. Then there are forty places in which there are hired houses or houses lent by the villages as regular preaching places. But above all we rejoice in having forty organized Sunday schools in as many different places. Boys and girls, big and little, dull and bright, dirty and clean, but mostly as full of fun as a box full of kittens, are being weaned away from idols and superstitions to a knowledge of God and his love.

In two towns kindergartens have been established, one of these in a town where the priests made every householder promise not to give us houseroom when we first came. This kindergarten is now held in a house once used as a temple school, and fifty bright little tots sing lustily "In Olden Days When Jesus Came" and then bow on the mats while teacher teaches them a prayer. Two of the forty Sunday schools are held in Buddhist temples, and another in the temple of the great god "Ebeshi Sama," who has fat cheeks and is supposed to look after us sailors. Special lessons are prepared and lesson cards issued from the ship, for we cannot teach the children here as you are taught at home, where there are no idols and your parents tell you of God.

There are all manner of other efforts which we make. There are mothers' meetings, night school classes and Bible classes. There are loan library boxes to place in the villages and a little monthly paper which goes full of the gospel story into hundreds of island homes. Added to all this is the "Fukuin Maru" church with its sixty-two members.

Now I wonder whether my young friends realize what all this means. You know, of course, that the hills and roadsides are full of shrines and temples, gods and godlets. But perhaps you do not know that the people here have regarded Christianity for centuries as a thing to be hated, and that the name "Christian" stood for all that was evil. The name "Yaso" being contemptibly used for Jesus, was and still is, a means by which mothers frighten their children to make them obey.

You do not know that when I first came to the islands many of the children fled in terror, as they had been told that the Christians killed children and made medicine of their bodies, or drew their blood to drink it. Then when fear passed off they turned and abused, calling me

and others "foreign fool," "child thief," "robber," "Christian pig," and worse, sometimes two or three following me, at other times fifty. Then finally, when by years of patience some were drawn to us and wanted to learn of that love of God which made us love and bear, they also were bitterly persecuted by parents and friends, not only, but by school teachers and officials as well.

Now, do not, I beg of you, try to make a martyr of me just because a thousand times or more I happen to have been publicly abused. I am a very cheerful martyr, I assure you. What I wish you to see is how hard it is for those who live in such conditions to find their way from superstition and darkness through to the life and light which the dear Saviour came and suffered that they might have. Some of these boys and men, girls and women who have taken a stand for God here in the islands, and others who have gone to the mainland and joined churches there are of God's noblest children. They have been tested in a way you can little dream of in your home surroundings.

What a great change has taken place you will know in some measure when I tell you that we are in many places regarded as belonging to the village; the little white ship is loved. Sometimes when sailing along or at anchor I will hear the children on the hills sing, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross," or else the special Sunday school rally song. In one place the popular song of the year is no other in street or home than, "When He Cometh to Make up His Jewels." I thank God for all that has been done, and I thank him for all the help of those at home who love and pray for the little white ship. I would ask you still to uphold us with your prayers. I would ask you still to love the little white ship, inasmuch as she is your messenger of love to those who are far from God and the Father's Home. May the thought of the wide work here give you wide sympathies, large hearts. May God give you hearts as wide as his wide ocean, which your sailor friend loves so much. Then your hearts will go out in love to all those who suffer because of sin and you will work and pray with us, and with all who love God at home and abroad, until all who are sad and heavy laden shall know Jesus as their King and Comforter.

